

birds—as indeed of all other feathered life—is prohibited, one would have thought that they would not be overly shy. However, it was of interest that the birds never approached within gun shot range of the launch, suggesting that poaching is rife.

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NAZIR LATIF

## 2. EXTENSION OF THE RANGE OF *SUNCUS STOLICZKANUS* IN THE RAJASTHAN DESERT

Ellerman & Morrison-Scott (1951) have recognised three sub-species of *Suncus stoliczkanus* Anderson, 1877, namely *S. s. stoliczkanus* (Gwalior, Salsette island, Nimar, Hoshangabad), *S. s. subfulvus* (Kathiawar and Sind), and *S. s. leucogenys* (Ajmer, Rajputana). The last species is based only on one specimen.

During the course of field trips for the ecological survey of the desert rodents (Prakash *et al.*, 1971), we collected this insectivore from three districts, and it was collected earlier from Jodhpur.

*Material examined*: 1 ♀ from Beechwal, 6 km north of Bikaner—January 1969; 2 ♂♂ and 1 ♀ from Churu—December 1968; 1 ♂ and 1 ♀ from Jhunjhunu—December 1968; 2 ♂♂ and 2 ♀♀ from Jodhpur—1961-62.

*Habitat selection*: In the north-eastern desert, the shrew was collected from the bases of the thorn-covered mud walls inside as well as on the outskirts of the villages. The general landscape around the villages was sandy plain interspersed with sand dunes. *Suncus murinus* was invariably collected in the same trap lines indicating that both the species of shrews were associated with each other as far as the habitat was concerned. At Jodhpur, however, the small shrew was collected from the burrows of the Desert Gerbil, *Meriones hurrianae* (Jerdon), in sandy plains supporting natural pastures. *Suncus stoliczkanus* were, however, found to be quite uncommon and the frequency of their occurrence in the traps varied from 0.2 to 0.6 shrews/100 traps/24 hours, at the former three localities.

*Body measurements*: The Rajasthan specimens appear to be smaller in size when compared with *S. s. leucogenys* and *S. s. sub-*

*fulvus*, on the basis of the measurements given by Blandford (1888-91) and Lindsay (1929). These measurements are summarised in Table below.

TABLE 1  
BODY MEASUREMENTS (IN mm) OF *Suncus stoliczkanus*

Body parts	Sex	Rajasthan material		after Lindsay (1929)	
		<i>S. s. leucogenys</i> Range	Mean	<i>S. s. leucogenys</i> Mean	<i>S. s. subfulvus</i> Mean
Head & Body	♂	58-61	59.3	72.0	69.0
	♀	51-58	55.3		
Tail	♂	34-38	36.0	46.0	44.0
	♀	32-38	35.3		
Hind foot	♂	10-12	11.0	11.5	11.0
	♀	10-11	10.6		
Ear	♂	8	8.0	8.5	9.0
	♀	8-10	8.6		

Following Lindsay's (1929) key the shrew is tentatively designated to the subspecies *leucogenys* on the basis of the presence of 1. cinnamon brown colour of the dorsum with reddish tinge, 2. a few whitish hair on the ear, and 3. dirty white coloration of the sides of head—between the angles of mouth and ears—the chin, and part of the chest. The Rajasthan specimens differ from the subspecies *subfulvus* in general coloration of the body and in not having 'strong yellow claws'. The fact remains, however, that Lindsay's key, with respect to this species, is based on the examination of very few specimens and, therefore, it does not appear to be factual. I would, therefore, like to keep the question of subspecies open till a good series of specimens is examined in detail.

The collection of this shrew from the localities mentioned above extends the range of the species further towards north-east into the desert, earlier report being only from Ajmer.

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CENTRAL ARID ZONE RESEARCH INSTITUTE,  
JODHPUR,  
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ISHWAR PRAKASH